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HOW TO...

Launch programs quickly

If you waste a lot of time finding and opening your applications, the Quick Launch toolbar can help you speed things up considerably. **Xavier Cortez** shows you how to get to the programs you need fast

When Windows XP is first installed it comes with a clean, sparse desktop. This may look tidy, but the Start button isn't necessarily the most efficient way to launch programs with your PC. The Quick Launch toolbar is a handy desktop gadget that provides buttons to help you launch applications with just one click. Here we show you how to use it.

1 This toolbar normally sits directly to the right of the Start button. If you can't see it, activate it by right-clicking a blank area of the taskbar that runs along the bottom of the screen, and selecting Toolbars Quick Launch. To resize it, right-click the taskbar again and deselect Lock the Taskbar. You can then move and resize it by

using the dotted handles that appear. You'll probably find that this toolbar contains a motley collection of buttons; various programs such as QuickTime and RealPlayer add buttons to the toolbar when you install them. These can be useful, but it's up to you which buttons are included.

2 To add a button that launches a program you use regularly, click Start, Programs and find the one you want. Rather than clicking to launch it, drag and drop it on to the Quick Launch toolbar using the right mouse button. When you release the mouse button, a menu will appear from which you need to select Move Here. You can use the same technique to create a button that opens a specific folder on your hard disk or

network with one click. Find the folder you want in My Computer, right-click, drag and drop it on to the toolbar, then select Create Shortcut Here from the menu that appears when you release the mouse button. To add a My Computer button, drag its icon from the desktop using the same technique.

3 To get rid of an icon, simply drag and drop it into the Recycle Bin – using the left button this time – or alternatively right-click it and select Delete. You can easily change the order of the buttons by dragging them around inside the toolbar. Resize the Quick Launch toolbar as necessary. When everything is just as you want it, right-click elsewhere on the taskbar and select Lock the Taskbar. ☐

